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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 TEGUCIGALPA 001614

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SUBJECT: MUSICAL CHAIRS: WHO'S IN AND WHO'S OUT IN HONDURAN
CABINET IN LAST SIX MONTHS OF MADURO ADMINISTRATION

REF: A. TEGUCIGALPA 1376

[1](#)B. TEGUCIGALPA 1349

[1](#)1. (SBU) Summary: With Honduran national elections approaching on November 27, the Maduro administration has been shaken up in recent months by a number of high-level cabinet changes. Turn-around in cabinet positions, whether due to scandal or less scintillating circumstances, will affect the remaining six months of Maduro's administration and may impact the political dynamics of the November presidential election. End Summary.

[1](#)2. (SBU) Below are descriptions of the recent Honduran cabinet changes and short bio sketches of new ministers. While no other cabinet changes are currently foreseen, in the lead-up to the November 27 national elections, Post does not discount the chance of more changes for political reasons.

[1](#)3. (SBU) New Minister of Foreign Affairs Mario Alberto Fortin Midence (DPOB: 09 January 1954, Honduras): FM Fortin replaced ex-Foreign Minister Leonidas Rosa Bautista in a very high-profile change. Rosa Bautista (DPOB: 4 February 1947, Honduras) became Attorney General (Fiscal General) after Ovidio Navarro (DPOB: 17 September 1938, Honduras) was dealt a death blow by the recent corruption scandal in the Public Ministry (see ref B). A long-standing close contact of the Embassy, Minister Fortin is a career diplomat. He served previously as Honduran ambassador to Germany and as Honduras' permanent representative to the United Nations. Most recently, Minister Fortin was Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs after serving for several years as Director General for Foreign Policy. After Fortin's elevation to Minister, Juan Alberto Lara Bueso (also a career diplomat; DPOB: 17 November 1946, Honduras) was promoted to the position of Vice-Minister.

[1](#)4. (SBU) New Minister of the Presidency Ramon Medina Luna (DPOB: 18 November 1948, Honduras): Most recently a presidential advisor on strategic affairs and communication with the rank of minister (effectively the National Security Advisor), Minister Medina also served as Minister of Industry and Commerce in a previous administration. He replaces ex-Minister of the Presidency Luis Cosenza (DPOB: 15 July 1943, Santa Rosa de Copan, Honduras), who is now Executive Director of the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB). Medina Luna holds a master's degree from the University of Chicago, has served in government off and on for 30 years, managed the 2001 presidential campaign of current President Ricardo Maduro, and is known to have an especially close relationship with President Maduro.

[1](#)5. (SBU) New Minister of Industry and Commerce Irving Guerrero Cubas (DPOB 01 June 1963, Tegucigalpa, Honduras): Minister Guerrero succeeded ex-Minister of Industry and Commerce Norman Garcia (DPOB: 17 February 1943, San Pedro Sula, Honduras). Guerrero is U.S.-educated, with a bachelor's degree from the University of South Carolina and a master's of business administration from Wake Forest University. He was formerly Vice Minister of Industry and Commerce for Economic Integration and Foreign Commerce. Ex-Minister Garcia was tapped by President Maduro to serve as a special envoy in Washington, DC, lobbying for U.S. congressional passage of CAFTA. In one of his final acts as Minister, Garcia insisted on the resignation of his other vice-minister, Salvador Melgar, who would otherwise have been his likely successor. Minister Guerrero has announced his intention to continue the work started by the first Maduro Administration Minister of Industry and Commerce, Juliette Handal (DPOB: 10 August 1952, Yoro, Honduras), including in the areas of small business development, alternative fuels, and pricing of basic goods.

[1](#)6. (SBU) New Minister of Governance and Justice Jose Roberto Pacheco Reyes (DPOB 15 April 1939, Valle, Honduras; possibly may have been born in El Salvador, along the Honduran/Salvadoran border): Minister Pacheco replaces ex-Minister Jorge Ramon Hernandez Alcerro (DPOB: 29 August 1948, Honduras). Pacheco is a lawyer by training whose career began as a judicial advisor to the National Congress

and then as a judge in Puerto Cortes. He has most recently been director of Banco Uno, Aval Card (a credit card company), and again a judicial advisor to the Congress. Pacheco, although from the same Department of Valle as Congressman Jose Pacheco Leon (whose brother, congressional candidate Angel Pacheco Leon was murdered November 23, 2001), claims not to be related to Congressman Pacheco. Though ex-minister Hernandez's resignation was ostensibly triggered by the 2004 Electoral Law (the law requires sitting cabinet ministers to resign six months before an election in which they are running for the National Congress), his last few weeks as minister were troubled by allegations of involvement in the recent passport scandal. Hernandez and his vice minister were investigated. The Prosecutor for Organized Crime filed a criminal charge against Hernandez for allegedly allowing a minor to leave the country without parental permission (see ref A and previous). That charge was recently dropped when a court ruled that the prosecutor had acted without direct instructions from the attorney general. The prosecutor is appealing that decision and the case continues.

Tuebner